

(Washington, DC) - Today, Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez released the following statement in support of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) letter to PBS President and CEO Paula Kerger regarding the Ken Burns' documentary "The War";

"Unfortunately, the notable participation of Hispanics in the U.S. armed forces in WWII continues to be overlooked in "The War." Although a proposal has been put forth by PBS and Mr. Burns, the only acceptable solution for the inclusion of the history of these heroic men and women is a true integration into the documentary narrative. We must honor the sacrifice and bravery of our Hispanic WWII veterans, and I look forward to continuing the conversation with PBS, Mr. Burns, and the many veterans' organizations who have participated in this dialogue."

Dear President Kerger:

On behalf of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC), we want to express our profound disappointment with the proposal put forth by PBS and Ken Burns regarding his World War II documentary entitled, "The War." As a Caucus, we feel that Mr. Burns' film fails to appropriately acknowledge the story of the Hispanic soldier, even with the changes you proposed earlier this week.

The CHC has formally taken the following position: "The only appropriate course of action is that the documentary entitled 'The War', fully incorporate within the body of the documentary the integral role of Hispanics." It is important that all Americans, including Hispanics, enjoy recognition in our historical dialogues commensurate with the contributions they make to our nation. When we fail to be inclusive, our history is incomplete. We owe it to past and future generations to record and report our history accurately and comprehensively. When history is complete, it is also fair and just. The CHC stands ready to assist PBS in achieving its mandate of serving the American public and in addressing the concerns raised by the CHC, but we will not support a decision that ignores or segregates our soldiers, our heroes, or our history.

We also want to share that on Wednesday, April 18th, our Caucus held a round-table with several prominent Hispanic organizations including: Defend The Honor, National Association of Hispanic Journalists, American GI Forum, National Puerto Rican Coalition, U.S. Hispanic

Chamber of Commerce, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, National Council of La Raza, Hispanic National Bar Association, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and the National Hispanic Environmental Council, concerning Mr. Burns' film. All organizations present shared our disappointment with PBS and Ken Burns' unwillingness to include the contributions made by approximate 500,000 Hispanics who served in WWII.

There were 13 Medals of Honor given to Hispanics in WWII, 11 to Mexican Americans and 2 to Puerto Ricans. Hispanics in WWII constituted a higher percentage of our troops than any other minority. In recognition of their extended service and valor, the soldiers of Company E of the 141st Regiment of the 36th Texas Infantry Division, which was made up entirely of Hispanics, were awarded 3 Medals of Honor, 31 Distinguished Service Crosses, 12 Legion of Merits, 492 Silver Stars, 1,685 Bronze Stars and numerous other commendations and decorations.

The American public looks to PBS to provide it with more than just information and the CHC has long held PBS in high regard for its programming and positive impact on communities throughout the country. We look to public television to tell the public's story. Before us is a vital opportunity to tell a story that has been passed over for far too long. Without fully integrating this story of sacrifice and distinction, "The War" will be a disappointment to the American Hispanic community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Joe Baca

Ciro D. Rodriguez

Chair

Chair

Congressional Hispanic Caucus

CHC Veterans Task Force